



# Partnering to Enhance State, Tribal & Territories' Wetland Programs

## Today's Presentation Outline:

1. Review of the Reformatting of the Core Elements Framework
2. Highlight Equity and Climate Opportunities
3. More details on the Regional Wetland Program Development Grants 2023

## Enhancing State and Tribal Wetland Programs (ESTP)

- Wetland Program Development Grants
- Core Elements Framework & Wetland Program Plans
- Peer-to-Peer networks
- EPA Targeted Technical Assistance
- Demonstrate Progress

# TRIBAL, STATE, AND TERRITORY

## WETLANDS PROGRAM CORE ELEMENT FRAMEWORK 2023

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# New in the CEF Introduction: Suggestions on How To Use the CEF

- Includes examples of Wetland Program Goals

EXAMPLE of new text:

*Voluntary Restoration and Protection Program:*

- Information needs:
  - Determine if adequate protection is occurring for aquatic resources, including wetlands.
  - **Identify critical wetland ecosystems and address/depict** them in habitat conservation plans or other relevant Tribal or State water resource planning documents. Discuss importance of system. For example, how do they help with climate adaptation and mitigation? Do they store flood waters or act as a barrier to storm surges associated with severe weather events? How do they recycle nutrients? Are they filtering pollutants? Do they support green infrastructure initiatives/nature-based solutions and nonpoint source control projects?
- Information uses/linkages with other core elements:
  - Determine adequacy of program – create, develop, or refine the voluntary restoration and protection program, as needed.
  - Use monitoring and assessment data **and local planning documents to determine priority for purchasing and restoring/enhancing aquatic resource habitats.**
  - Use data to develop a plan that can further communicate the important uses and build partnerships to facilitate science-based restoration and protection activities.



# Wetland Program Plans: Equity and Climate

## KEY SUMMARY POINTS

- Tribes and States should use the Core Element Framework (CEF) as the foundation for developing a comprehensive wetland program and developing a Wetland Program Plan (WPP).
- Tribes and States can use a suite of activities or one activity simultaneously to address a specific or multiple needs. The actions and activities outline how a Tribe or State could plan, develop, and implement a program to meet its goals without being overly prescriptive.
- Tribes and States should articulate in the WPPs their goals and actions to accomplish over time, provide metrics for tracking success, and support for decision-making. For example, WPPs can include critical issues, such as climate adaptation and environmental justice.
- Tribes and States may leverage Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) to develop and fund specific actions and activities covered in the CEF. Note, in order to be considered eligible for a grant, the proposal needs to demonstrate a linkage with the CEF.
- Tribes and States are encouraged to work with their partners and interested parties (or develop new partnerships) to formalize agreements and actions to promote outreach, education, and other activities jointly where they align with their needs. If part of a WPDG proposal, outreach, education, and partnerships should be linked to one or more of the core elements.
- Tribes and States should use and promote their WPP to publicly communicate their needs and planned actions/activities. If a WPP is funded by EPA, EPA posts the WPP on a publicly accessible EPA webpage.



# New in the CEF Introduction: Information about Wetland Program Development Grants & Wetland Program Plans

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EXAMPLE of new text:

...”Additionally, WPPs can be used to address evolving wetland issues such as climate adaptation and environmental justice. For example, Tribes and States can identify climate goals to signal how monitoring and assessment activities could be used to obtain information on how coastal wetlands mitigate storm surges associated with climate-induced extreme weather events. Over time, these data can be used to support permit actions under the regulatory core element, wetland restoration priority-setting actions under the voluntary restoration and protection core element, or to develop the narrative wetland water quality standards under the water quality standards core element. The WPP could include actions to assess and mitigate flood impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns”



# Core Elements Framework: Menu of Actions and Activities

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TEXT Before each Core Element Tables:

”...EPA recommends that Tribes and States first identify their program specific monitoring and assessment needs. After the needs are outlined for the program, then program goals can be identified. The program goals can be used to determine which phase to enter. For example, if your goal is to determine the extent and location of wetland resources within a specific area, Phase 1 actions and activities are the starting point. If implementation is the focus, then start with Phase 2. If program refinement or decision-making is the focus, then start with Phase 3.

EPA recommends that you design and build your program to address your specific needs, which could result in a blending of some activities from the same phase or of different phases..”



# Final *Draft* of the Core Element Framework: Menu of Activities

- Preview of the Updated Core Element Tables
- Equity and Climate Activities Included in the Menu of Activities

(Share Screen for Preview of Tables/Highlights)